



Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee

Date: Wednesday, 20 November 2019

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Venue: Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non pecuniary interests, in connection with any application on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

2. REFORM OF THE ANNUAL CANVASS (Pages 1 - 28)

3. CONCLUSION OF STATUTORY REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES 2019 (Pages 29 - 58)

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**Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee
Wednesday, 20 November 2019**

REPORT TITLE:	REFORM OF THE ANNUAL CANVASS
REPORT OF:	Director: Governance and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of planned reforms to improve the annual canvass of electors undertaken each year by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) across Great Britain.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the report contained in Appendix 1 to this report be noted by the Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 To keep Members of the Committee updated on Electoral Services activities.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 None

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) in Great Britain are required to conduct an annual canvass of all residential properties in the area for which they have responsibility.

3.2 The purpose of the canvass is to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register. At the conclusion of the canvass, a revised version of the electoral register is published on 1 December.

3.3 While the current canvass is effective overall in meeting its objectives, it is widely recognised to be outdated and cumbersome. It involves numerous prescribed steps, is heavily paper based, expensive, and complex to administer.

3.4 Alternative models for conducting the annual canvass have been piloted and after evaluation, the Cabinet Office intend to amend the legislation that governs the annual canvass with the aim for this reform to start in 2020.

3.5 The Cabinet Office Statement of Policy provides a full overview of the Canvass Reform and is contained in Appendix 1.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Cabinet Office do not expect Local Authorities to realise the full benefits of canvass reform in year one, but would expect the benefits to be realised over the next few years. Therefore, there will be funding in place for the next financial year, either through upfront grants or through the Justification Led Bid (JLB) process.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Such implications are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The delivery of Canvass Reform will be met from within existing resources

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Not applicable

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 No such implications arise from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Reform of the Annual Canvass Statement of Policy

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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HM Government



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Reform of the Annual Canvass

Statement of Policy

September 2019

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document provides an overview of planned reforms to improve the annual canvass of electors undertaken each year by Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) across Great Britain. This final statement of policy reflects the feedback from the Autumn 2018 consultation on the policy proposals; as well as feedback from the statutory consultations with the Electoral Commission, the Information Commissioner's Office and continuing discussions between the UK Government, Welsh Government and Scottish Government. A summary response to these consultations is being published alongside this statement. The intention is to work with stakeholders and the devolved administrations to implement these proposals ahead of the 2020 canvass across Great Britain.

2. Overview

The Current Canvass

- 2.1. The current canvass gathers information on potential additions and changes to, and deletions from, the register. Since the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) in 2014, further action is typically required to convert this information into actual changes on the electoral registers. The annual canvass is therefore no longer a registration process in itself, although it forms part of Electoral Registration Officers' (EROs') wider registration duties. EROs must individually invite potential new electors to apply to register, and verify their identity, before they can be added to the register. This process sits separately to the annual canvass but can, and generally does occur concurrently.
- 2.2. While the current canvass is effective overall in meeting its objectives, it is widely recognised to be outdated and cumbersome. The one-size-fits-all approach, incorporating numerous prescribed steps, takes little account of differences within and between registration areas. It is heavily paper based, expensive, complex to administer and stifles innovation. It is also clear that the current process leads to confusion for the citizen.

- 2.3. The annual canvass is only one of the many ways an ERO is able to find information to update their electoral register. It sits alongside year round activities such as mining other datasets (for example, council tax records) to identify residents who are not currently registered to vote, and specific targeted work for certain groups. Since the introduction of online electoral registration in 2014, there has also been a shift to 'event-led' registration, where millions of applications are now made in the run up to polls. That said, no major national polls were held in 2018 and data from the IER Digital Service shows that the number of registration applications were significantly up during the canvass compared to the previous few years. This reinforces the continuing importance of the annual canvass in maintaining the completeness and accuracy of electoral registers each year.
- 2.4. EROs in Great Britain are required to conduct an annual canvass of all residential properties in the area for which they have responsibility.
- 2.5. Section 9A of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983) places a duty on EROs to maintain the electoral register for their area. Section 9D of the RPA 1983 requires EROs to conduct an annual canvass of all residential properties in their area. This is supplemented by S.9A(2)(a) and (b) which provides that EROs must send the canvass form more than once and must make house to house inquiries on one or more occasion. Further provision in relation to the conduct of the annual canvass is made in Regulations 31FA, 32ZA and 32ZB of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 and the Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001.
- 2.6. The purpose of the canvass is to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register. This means identifying citizens who should be registered but are currently not, as well as identifying electors who are no longer at a property and should therefore be removed from the register. A revised version of the electoral register must be published by 1 December¹, following the conclusion of the annual canvass.
- 2.7. EROs must send every household an annual canvass form (currently known as a Household Enquiry Form (HEF)). The HEF requires a response, regardless of whether there have been any changes in the household to report. Failure to respond is an offence and magistrates have the power to impose a fine of up to £1000. EROs must follow up any non-responses with a further two reminders and carry out a household visit, if required. The household visit can be conducted at any stage; any of the initial, first reminder and second reminder HEF steps can be combined with the household visit or it can be conducted as a separate process. Each paper HEF must be accompanied by an addressed pre-paid return envelope.

¹ The publication of the revised register can be deferred until 1 February if there has been an election held in the area during the canvass period.

- 2.8. Pilots of alternative models for conducting the annual canvass were run in 2016 and 2017². From the evaluation of the pilots it is clear that there is merit in enabling EROs to more effectively target their resources towards those properties where the occupiers have changed and the electoral register needs to be updated. This would allow them to ensure their resources are targeted at the properties which need it, with a more streamlined process for those properties where composition remains the same.
- 2.9. The Electoral Registration and Administration (ERA) Act 2013 contains a broad power in section 7 to amend or abolish the canvass in Great Britain through secondary legislation. The intention is to use this power (and powers to make and amend regulations provided by the 1983 Act) to amend the legislation governing the annual canvass during 2019. Our aim is for the whole of Great Britain to benefit from this reform from the start of the 2020 annual canvass.
- 2.10. Legislation will also need to be made in the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales in relation to the local government registers in Scotland and Wales. Given this, three Statutory Instruments will be required - one taken forward by the UK Government in relation to the UK Parliamentary register in Great Britain and the local government register in England, and one taken forward by each of the Scottish and Welsh Governments in relation to the local government registers in Scotland and Wales.

Objectives for Canvass Reform

- 2.11. The intention is that the legislation governing the reformed annual canvass is less prescriptive and therefore more permissive than is currently the case. The objectives of canvass reform are:
- to make the process simpler and clearer for citizens;
 - for EROs to have greater discretion to run a tailored canvass which better suits their local area;
 - to reduce the administrative burden on EROs and the financial burden on taxpayers;
 - to safeguard the completeness and accuracy of the registers;
 - to maintain the security and integrity of the registers; and
 - to include the capacity for innovation and improvement, with a model that is adaptable to future change.
- 2.12. The purpose of the reformed canvass of households will be the same as now, that is to find out:

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719824/Piloting_Alternative_Electoral_Canvassing_Models_-_Full_Report.pdf

- the names and addresses of persons who are entitled to be registered, but who are not already registered;
- those persons who are on the register, but who are no longer entitled to be registered at a particular address (normally because they have moved).

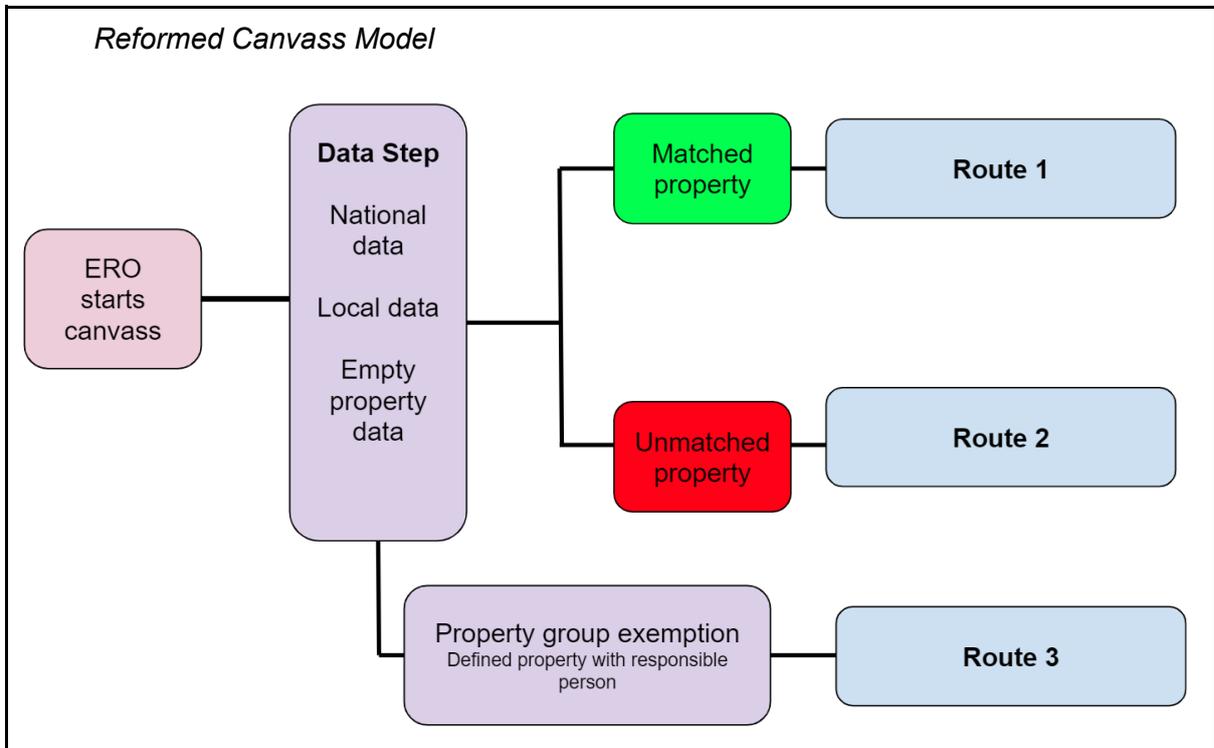
- 2.13. We do not intend to amend the dates during which EROs conduct the canvass. It will remain a matter for EROs' discretion when they wish to start their canvass. The requirement to publish the revised register by 1 December each year will remain, as will the ability to defer publication of the revised register until 1 February if an election is held in their area within the canvass period.
- 2.14. The annual canvass forms an integral part of the year round registration process. The need for EROs to complete exercises to find new electors throughout the year, and consistently maintain the accuracy of their registers (i.e. completing deletions throughout the year) will be instrumental to the successful implementation of the reforms. We will be working closely with EROs throughout implementation to ensure they have the capability and tools required to successfully carry out the reformed canvass process.

3. The New Canvass Model

Summary

- 3.1. The new canvass will incorporate a 'data step' at the outset of the process. This will inform the ERO, based on the data available to them, which properties are likely to have an unchanged household composition, based on matching their data on registered electors against national Government data and, where relevant, locally held data sources. Where the data the ERO holds on registered electors matches data in another reliable and accurate dataset, the ERO can have some confidence that the details they hold on their register remain accurate. The ERO will then follow one of two routes for each property. Route 1, the matched properties route, will be used for properties where the data indicates no change in household composition. Route 2, the unmatched properties route, will be used for properties where data matching has highlighted that there may be a change to the information the ERO currently holds for the property. This will allow the canvass process to be streamlined for those households that have not changed since the previous year. It will enable the ERO to target their resources to where responses and updates to the electoral register are believed to be required. The draft legislation clearly states that electors in both Route 1 and Route 2 properties will be contacted during the canvass to give them the opportunity to inform the ERO of any changes as needed.
- 3.2. A third route, Route 3 - the defined properties route, will be available for property types which do not fit clearly within Routes 1 and 2. The characteristics of these property types mean that the ERO can more effectively and efficiently obtain information on residents using an alternative approach, where they are able to identify a 'responsible person' to provide the information in respect of all residents. Examples of these property types are care homes and student halls of residence. Should the ERO be unable to successfully obtain information about the property from a 'responsible person' they will need to canvass these property types using the Route 2 process. Properties eligible for Route 3 will be identified at the start of the canvass process, but will not be exempted from the data match step, which is explained in more detail in Section 6 below.
- 3.3. Consistent with the intention that every property will receive a canvass communication, the draft legislation removes the 'single occupancy tick box'. This was introduced in 2016 as part of a set of cost reduction measures ahead of wider canvass reform. Where an elector has indicated that they are the sole occupant of the property, and where no other available information suggests otherwise, the ERO can choose to exempt the property from the next canvass (or the current canvass, if one is already underway). The original thinking was this would reduce canvass costs as it would effectively allow EROs to exclude a proportion of properties from the canvass cycle.

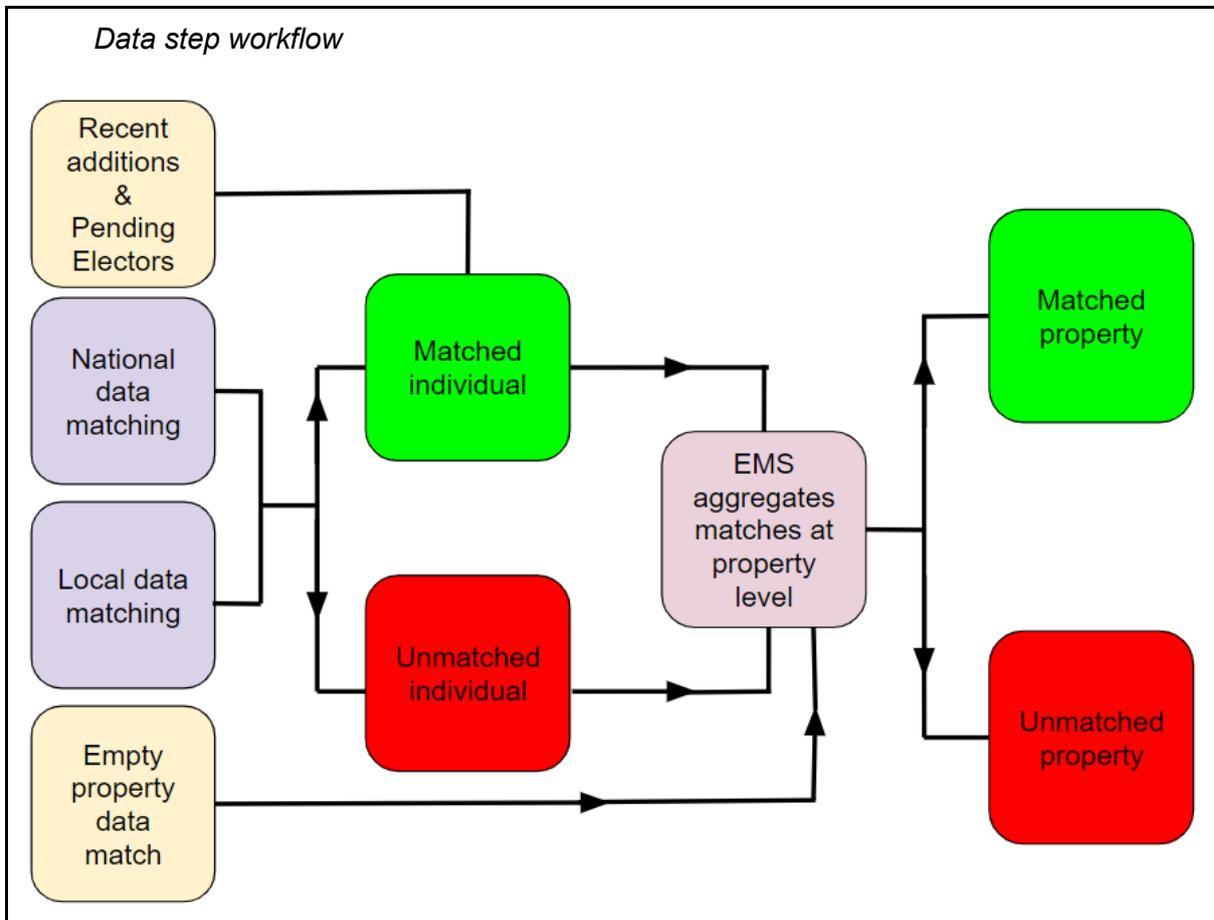
3.4. However, in practice many electors were confused by the tick box. We understand that, due to this confusion, there was a high risk of incorrect reporting resulting in many EROs being unwilling to rely on the tickbox information and continuing to send the Household Enquiry Form. It is also illogical, under the reformed canvass, for a property with one matched elector to be sent no communication whilst a property with two would be. It is therefore removed in the draft legislation and this change will be reflected on the online Register to Vote website once the legislation is in force.



The Data Matching Step

3.5. Under the reformed canvass, data matching will be used at the outset of the canvass to help identify those properties where the residents are more likely to have changed. All EROs in Great Britain will be required to match specified data they hold on registered electors against a national dataset. The draft legislation makes provision for the use of the data held at the Department for Work and Pensions data warehouse. This dataset is already used in the electoral registration process to verify an applicant's identity. Other national datasets may also be considered in the future.

- 3.6. EROs will have the discretion to match the data they hold on registered electors against local datasets, in addition to matching against the national dataset. These local datasets might include council tax records and other datasets held by their local authority. Local datasets are available to the ERO under their existing powers, provided by Regulations 23, 35 and 35A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 and the Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001.



- 3.7. The data matching will occur at an individual elector level; matching name, date of birth (where held) and address (this should be in the form of string address and Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) where available) for national data, and on name and string address or UPRN at a minimum for local data. Every individual sent for matching will receive a match score. This match score will deem the elector either matched or unmatched. These results will then be aggregated at a household level.

National data matching

- 3.8. All EROs in Great Britain will be required to send the full name, date of birth (where held) and the address (in string form, as well as UPRN where held) of registered electors or attainers (i.e. including 16-17 year olds) for national data matching, checking the data they hold on registered electors against data held by the DWP. EROs will have the discretion to exclude some other electors from the data match - see 3.15 below.
- 3.9. The data will be sent via the Individual Electoral Registration Digital Service (IER DS) and matched against data held by the DWP. The IER DS is a series of interconnecting digital applications which govern the receipt, transmission, and processing of data, and is also used to process applications to register under IER. The process will be completed by the DWP with the IER DS used as a secure conduit to transmit the ERO's data to the DWP and, subsequently, to allow EROs to retrieve their DWP data match results.
- 3.10. For each ERO, this should be done at the start of their canvass process each year. Details on how the national data match step will be conducted will be provided to EROs through guidance and helpsheets from the Cabinet Office and the Electoral Commission.

Local data matching

- 3.11. EROs will have the discretion to match their data on registered electors against locally held datasets, such as council tax and housing benefit data. They are able to access the local data using Regulation 23, 35 or 35A powers.³ For some EROs, matching against local data will be an effective tool to ensure they have the maximum amount of accurate data to compare against their register. There may also be specific groups of people where local data is highly effective in identifying their current address.
- 3.12. In Scotland, 14-15 year old attainers will be excluded from the national data match step as they are unlikely to appear on the national dataset used. Instead, the ERO may match these individuals using local data, which is in line with the current process for verification checking on these young attainers. This will also apply to Welsh attainers once the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Bill 2019 receives Royal Assent and enters into force, which will lower the minimum voting age for the National Assembly and local government elections in Wales to 16.

³ The Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 and the Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001

- 3.13. EROs will be free to choose whether to match their whole register against a local dataset, or to use this selectively for those individuals who do not match against DWP data.
- 3.14. The most important aspect of the local data matching is that the ERO focuses on quality and accuracy when deciding what datasets to be used. The evidence gathered from the 2016/17 pilots show that the properties where there is a change to be reported should be routed into Route 2, the unmatched properties route, as this involves more touch points with the elector and more opportunities for change to be reported. Data of high accuracy and high quality will enable the ERO to accurately determine the correct route. However, should poor quality data be used this could result in properties that have changes to report going down Route 1. This could have a bearing on the effectiveness of the canvass. EROs will therefore need to give careful consideration to which datasets to use, utilising any guidance produced by the Cabinet Office in conjunction with the Electoral Commission.

Exclusions from the data match step

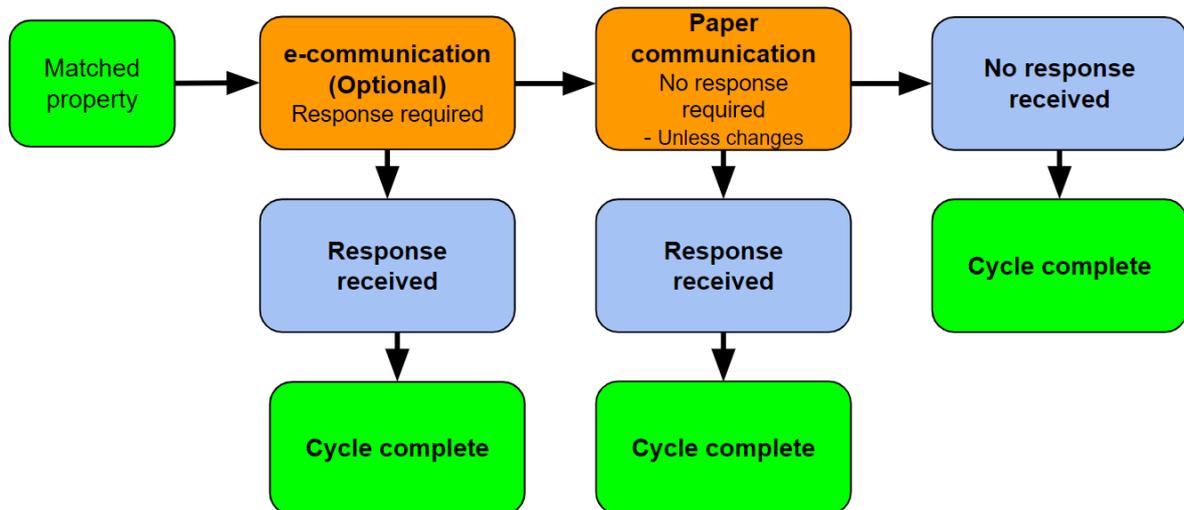
- 3.15. EROs will have the discretion to exclude some electors from the data step. The first group are those who have made a recent successful application. Recent additions to the register maintained by the ERO can be automatically classed as 'matched' in the data step. The rationale is that recent applicants should not need to re-confirm the details of their registration so soon after applying and, were they to be included in the data match, may fail to match due to the currency of data held in other datasets. EROs will have some discretion to decide what constitutes a recent addition. If an application was determined within a maximum of 90 calendar days prior to the day on which the ERO undertakes the data match, the ERO will be free to choose to exclude that entry from data matching. EROs will be able to set any maximum less than that, down to zero days.
- 3.16. Determined electors will be automatically excluded from the data match step. 'Determined electors' are those whose application to register to vote has been successfully determined by the ERO. However, they will not be added to the register until the next monthly alteration is published. Since they will not appear on a register at the point of the data match, the EROs will not submit their details for matching. We consider that this is a reasonable approach since no more than 30 days will have elapsed between the point of their determination and the data match step.

Using the results of the data match step

- 3.17. The purpose of the data step is to help an ERO decide which route each property should be sent down. Matching will occur at an individual elector level, matching name, date of birth (where held) and address. National and local data matching will return a result of either 'matched' or 'unmatched' for individual electors. A matched result is where an individual's information was successfully matched against either DWP or local data, or both. An unmatched score is where some or all of the information sent for data matching has failed to match. For the national data match, an algorithm will determine, from the range of data points which match or fail to match, whether an individual is matched or unmatched overall.
- 3.18. If the ERO has decided to use Route 3 they will have the option of using the results of the data matching step to inform their determination as to the most appropriate route to use. However, where they have identified a Route 3 property in accordance with the stated criteria, they are not required to take into account the results of any data match in deciding whether to canvass using Route 3.
- 3.19. If EROs choose to match their whole register against local data, and the result is different from the result of the national match, it will be for the ERO to decide which of the match results they wish to use. As there will be no set hierarchy between national or local data matching results, the ERO may determine if they wish to accept a match from either dataset or, if they have more trust in one dataset above the others, they may determine to override a matched response with a more accurate unmatched response. The accuracy of the various datasets used will be essential to making an informed decision.
- 3.20. In practice EROs could choose to ignore a failed match against either national or local data, as long as the other data match enabled them to be satisfied no changes were necessary in respect of a particular property. However EROs couldn't override failed matches against both national and local data as it would not be possible for them to be satisfied no changes were necessary in respect of that property in those circumstances, and would not be in compliance with the required standards
- 3.21. Pilot studies undertaken by the Cabinet Office in 2012 show that the national data is highly accurate when indicating that an elector is currently resident in a property. The accuracy for a matched elector was 95%. The accuracy level is lower for electors who did not match. Whilst EROs can be fairly confident that a match against DWP data means the elector is still residing in the property, the reverse is not true for a non-match. Rather, it indicates a degree of uncertainty about whether the elector is still present. This means some electors who are unmatched and directed to Route 2 will respond to say they are still resident in the property.

- 3.22. Individual level matches will be aggregated within each ERO's Electoral Management Software (EMS) system for each residential property to create property level match rates. This is because the canvass operates at the property level, even under IER. For a property to be designated as 'matched', all the electors registered at the address will need to be matched at the individual level against either (or both) national or local data.
- 3.23. For properties that have been 100% matched at the individual level, the ERO can (but will not be required to) follow the Route 1 process. For properties where some, or all, of the registered occupants are unmatched, EROs must follow the more intensive Route 2 process. In this way, the data matching helps the ERO determine which properties go through a less expensive and less resource intensive process (Route 1), and which properties must go through the unmatched properties process (Route 2).
- 3.24. The option to canvass a property using Route 1 will only be available where the results of the data step lead an ERO to believe that there has been no change at a property in terms of registered residents. This means that all of the residents have been matched against national and/or local data, or they have recently been successfully determined or they are a recent addition to the register (as described above).
- 3.25. There is no requirement that a property must be sent down Route 1. EROs will retain the option to conduct a Route 2 canvass for any address. There may be some cases where EROs decide to conduct a Route 2 canvass for a property even when all the individuals at that address have been data matched.
- 3.26. EROs may also match properties where there are no current registered electors using local data. If EROs have sufficient data to confirm that the property is currently empty or should remain with no registered electors (i.e, there are residents, but none are eligible to be registered to vote because, for example, none meet the nationality criteria) then EROs will have discretion to treat it as a property that is unlikely to report a change and, therefore, send it down Route 1 process. If EROs do not have data to confirm that a property should have no registered electors, then the property must follow the unmatched properties Route 2 process.

4. Route 1 - The Matched Properties Route



Overview

- 4.1. Route 1 will be a more streamlined approach to the annual canvass process, when compared to both the current legislated canvass and the new Route 2 canvass.
- 4.2. EROs will be required to send a communication to the occupant(s) of each property in Route 1. This will provide an opportunity and a prompt for residents at that property to inform the ERO of any changes. If the details which EROs hold on their registers in respect of the property are complete and correct, it will not be necessary for every household to respond to the canvass process.
- 4.3. There will be two options available to EROs: either to send a single prescribed written communication (Canvass Communication A) to the property, or to first send an e-communication and then follow up with the prescribed written communication (Canvass Communication A) to the property where there is no response. The e-communication will be entirely optional.

Route 1 e-communication

- 4.4. EROs will have discretion, where they hold the necessary contact information, to send an e-communication to a Route 1 property in the first instance. 'E-communication' is meant in the broadest sense to mean email, SMS or any other form of electronic or digital communication.
- 4.5. The intention is to give EROs an opportunity to reduce printing and postage costs, staff processing time and promote channel shift, driving further savings.

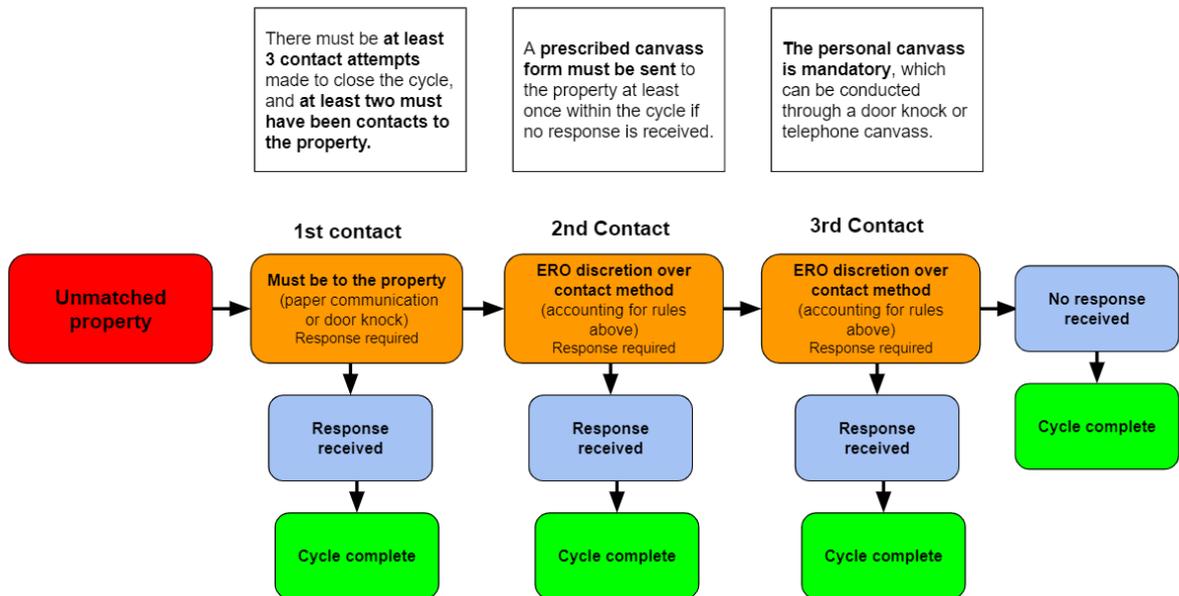
- 4.6. Because an e-communication is linked to an individual and not directly linked to a property (in the same way as a posted communication is), a Route 1 e-communication will require a response to confirm that all the electors are still resident. If the elector fails to respond to an e-communication within a reasonable timeframe, an ERO will be obliged to send a Route 1 Written Communication to the Property (Canvass Communication A).
- 4.7. Where a Route 1 e-communication is sent, the addressee(s) must be asked to confirm that the details supplied for everyone resident in the household are complete and correct. Alternatively, if the details are incomplete or incorrect, the addressee(s) will be obliged to inform the ERO and provide the correct details. EROs will be free to use an online response service for responses if they so wish. When using an e-communication, it will be mandatory to send the contact to each elector at that address for whom the ERO holds the relevant contact details (e.g. e-mail address or phone number in the case of SMS). This is so as many individuals as possible have the ability to receive the e-communication.
- 4.8. If they are successful in eliciting a response to the e-communication within a reasonable time, EROs will be able to close the process without sending a Route 1 written communication.
- 4.9. Where the ERO has received information from the property, or a previous resident of the property, that suggests that household composition has changed, without having received sufficient information to close the chasing cycle, they will need to send the property down Route 2 (see section 5).

Route 1 Written Communication to the Property (Canvass Communication A)

- 4.10. EROs will be required to send a prescribed Route 1 written communication, Canvass Communication A, to all properties who have not responded to an e-communication. This will either be due to the ERO not holding the relevant contact information in order to send an e-communication; the ERO choosing not to send an e-communication; or the residents not responding to the e-communication in a reasonable time.
- 4.11. Although occupiers will be obliged to let EROs know if the information presented in the communication is inaccurate or incomplete, there will be no requirement for them to respond to a paper canvass communication where they have no change to report. Consequently under the reformed canvass model, there will be no requirement for EROs to follow up non-responses to the Route 1 prescribed written communication (Canvass Communication A). EROs will not be required to send any reminders to the property or conduct a visit. This communication may be accompanied by a pre-addressed, pre-paid envelope or a Freepost address may be included if the ERO so wishes, but there will be no requirement to include one.

- 4.12. The data matching step will have given EROs a reasonable degree of confidence that there has been no change at the address. The occupants of a property will have had an opportunity to say there has been a change. If they do not, EROs can reasonably assume that their register is accurate for that property and close the canvass for that property. This will significantly reduce costs and administrative burden for registration officers.
- 4.13. It will be an offence to fail to notify the ERO of a change in response to a Route 1 canvass communication. It will also be an offence to supply false information.
- 4.14. The Electoral Commission will have a duty to design the Route 1 prescribed written communication (Canvass Communication A) and EROs will be obliged to use the communication that the Electoral Commission designs. Legislation will prescribe that the Route 1 written communication should be pre-populated where the ERO holds the information required by the communication on electors resident at the property.
- 4.15. It will need to include the following minimum content:
- The full name and nationality of each registered elector aged 16 or over in England, and aged 14 or over in Scotland and Wales ;
 - A statement on how the data will be used and processed, in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation;
 - In England and Wales the ERO must, if they have the information, indicate whether individuals are aged 76 or over. This is necessary to enable EROs to fulfil their legal duties under the Juries Act 1974 and the Representation of the People Act 1983.
- 4.16. Canvass Communication A will also set out the following, but make it clear this information only applies where households have changes to report:
- A date by which a response should be provided;
 - Where a response is provided, whether online, by phone or using the form itself, the responder should declare that the information provided is true.

5. Route 2 - The Unmatched Properties Route



Overview

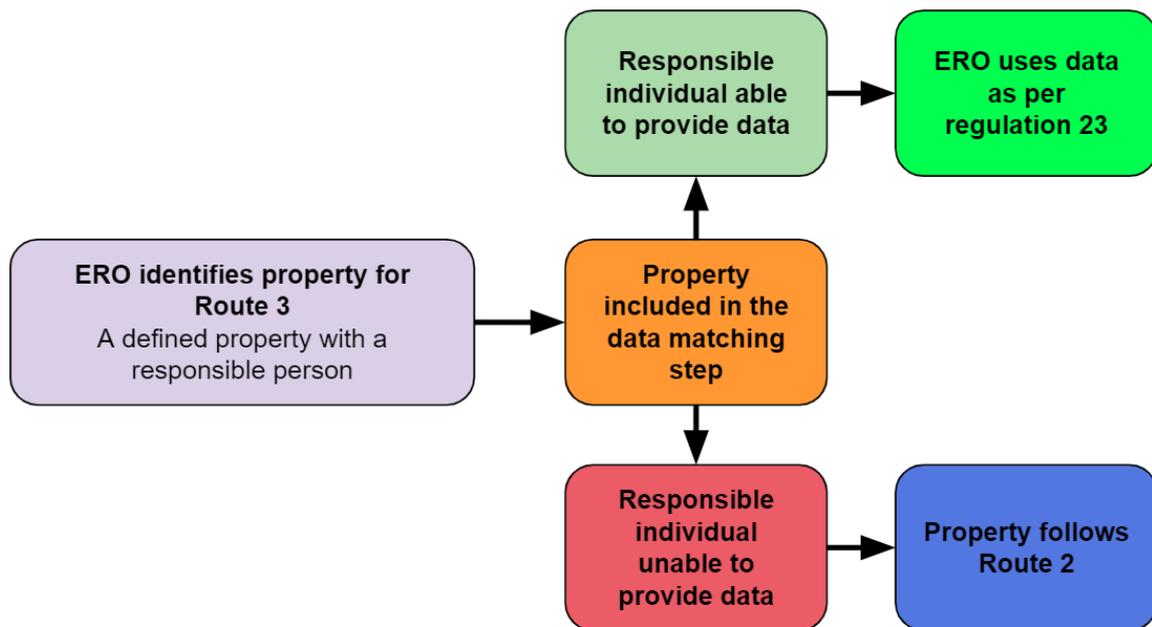
- 5.1. Following on from the results of the data matching step, if the data suggests that there may be a change to the information EROs currently hold for a property on their register, they must follow the Route 2 process. In the case where the non-match is correct and new citizens have moved into the property, and/or former occupants have left, it will be vital for EROs to receive this change information. Equally, if the non-matched elector is still there, it will be important for EROs to receive confirmation of this in the form of a no change response. Both scenarios rely on the occupier returning a response to the ERO.
- 5.2. Route 2 will be similar to the current canvass process which is followed for all households. Nationally, we anticipate approximately a quarter of all households will need to go down the Route 2 process, although this will vary considerably from one area to another depending, for example, on whether it is an area of high or low population churn.

The three contact cycle

- 5.3. Under the Route 2 cycle EROs will be required to meet the following minimum requirements:
- A minimum of three contact attempts must be completed during the canvass process.
 - The first contact attempt must be a communication with the property (written or household visit), rather than with an individual.
 - A further contact in the process must also be with the property.
 - A personal canvass (telephone call to a matched elector or household visit) is required, if no response has been received, as part of the canvass cycle.
 - The prescribed Canvass Form must be sent at some point in the cycle, along with a prepaid, pre-addressed envelope.
- 5.4. It is important the ERO makes contact with the property in the first instance as Route 2 will apply where the data matching reveals some doubt about the current residents at the property.
- 5.5. In practice, the first contact attempt with the property will require the ERO to either send a written communication to the property or to carry out a household visit. There will be two options available to EROs in regards to sending a written communication to the property; a prescribed written communication (Canvass Communication B), or a prescribed Canvass Form. The Electoral Commission will be responsible for designing both of these communications.
- 5.6. Should the ERO not receive a response from the property within a reasonable time the ERO will follow up with a second contact stage. If the ERO does not receive a response to the second contact stage within a reasonable time, they should follow up with a third contact stage. EROs will have discretion over the contact method for the second and third contacts, which might be by post, email, SMS text, telephone, household visit or by another electronic communication method. This will enable the ERO to tailor their approach to the area and the electors/properties involved. Importantly, the 2016 and 2017 Canvass Pilots showed that a mixture of communication methods can be more effective than repeated uses of the same communication method.

- 5.7. Where the ERO holds email addresses or mobile phone numbers, they may choose to send an e-communication as the second or third contact stage. If so they will be required to send e-communications to all matched electors who they hold relevant contact details for. This is because it is likely to increase the chances of successfully contacting the household and prompting a response, and e-communications to only one matched elector may raise suspicions of phishing.
- 5.8. As part of the Route 2 cycle a personal contact attempt is required. A household visit or a telephone call would both meet this requirement. If the ERO chooses to use telephone calls to meet the personal contact requirement they will be required to call all matched electors at the property for whom they hold a contact number, unless they receive a response.
- 5.9. If a response is received at any stage, the chasing cycle will be closed and no further canvass contacts will be required (although the ERO may need to start the Invitation to Register (ITR) process for individuals whose names have been added to the returned form, or the deletions process for electors who no longer appear to be resident, or for other changes such as a change of name).

6. Route 3 - The Defined Properties Route



Overview and eligibility

- 6.1. The starting point for all non-matched properties will be the Route 2 process. However, EROs will be able to decide to follow a different canvass process for certain types of property. This exemption process should be applied for certain property types that cannot be canvassed as effectively using the Route 1 or Route 2 process.
- 6.2. The ERO will have the discretion to choose Route 3 where the property in question meets one of two characteristics of a relevant property and EROs have successfully identified a responsible person who lawfully holds information on the residents of the property. An ERO would need to approach the responsible person to seek the required information using their existing powers⁴. This route is optional and EROs may choose not to utilise it.

⁴ Regulations 23, 35 and 35A of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 and the Representation of the People (Scotland) Regulations 2001.

- 6.3. Properties which would be appropriate for use of Route 3 will be outlined in legislation and will have one of the following characteristics. They will be either:
- A property with multiple occupants who do not form a single household, in respect of which the ERO reasonably believes that s/he is more likely to obtain information about the occupants of the property from a responsible person; or
 - A property in respect of which the ERO has made an attempt to deliver a document in the previous 18 months, but has been unable to do so, and where the ERO reasonably believes that s/he is more likely to obtain information about the occupants of the property from a responsible person. (For example, the ERO may have been unable to deliver a document due to issues with postal delivery.) .
- 6.4. The following property types are examples of those that will be eligible for the Route 3 process:
- Registered residential care homes
 - HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupancy) registered with the Local Authority
 - Student Accommodation
 - Hostels
- 6.5. The draft legislation specifically excludes using Route 3 for an ordinary block of flats.

Route 3 canvass process

- 6.6. EROs will need to consider, from one year to the next, whether they wish to make use of Route 3 in their forthcoming canvass. If they do, they will need to review if they still hold the relevant information for the responsible person and if the property still meets the criteria set out for these properties.
- 6.7. If the ERO commences the Route 3 process they will need to approach the identified responsible person, using the Regulation 23 power, to request the required information for all current residents. The minimum information the ERO should seek would be the full name, nationality and if the person is aged over 76 for England and Wales. Where they hold the data, the responsible person may also provide a telephone number and/or email address for each resident. In Scotland there is a requirement to request the date of birth of anyone aged 14 or 15.

- 6.8. Where EROs are successful in gaining a list of eligible residents, the data provided will inform them who is resident at the address and correctly registered to vote, and individuals who are not registered but may be eligible to register. The ERO will also be able to determine who on their register appears to be no longer resident, enabling them to take the necessary follow up actions (such as a registration review). The EROs must then issue Invitations to Register (ITRs) to any individuals identified who are not currently registered, and chase them up as set out in legislation if they do not respond.
- 6.9. Where it does not prove possible for EROs to obtain the required information on the eligible residents from the responsible person within a reasonable period, EROs will be obliged to revert to the Route 2 process (regardless of the outcome of the data matching), as outlined above.

7. Canvass Reform Data Test

- 7.1. Between July 2019 and February 2020, a test of the new data matching step will be conducted. More information about the data matching step can be found in section 2 above. The Cabinet Office has issued guidance to support electoral administrators through the data testing process.
- 7.2. The national data test will involve the mandatory testing of national data from the DWP for all EROs. It will take place in early 2020 once the testing provisions in the Canvass Reform Statutory Instruments have come into force. Cuts of national data will be taken from the start of the 2019 canvass and matched with the start of canvass register. The match results will then be compared to the end of canvass register to allow EROs to plan resources, as the test results will tell the ERO what proportion of their electorate would have gone down Routes 1, 2 and 3. The results of the national data match test will be shared with EROs soon after the test takes place.
- 7.3. EROs will also have the option of testing local data sources. If they choose to do so, local data match testing will be conducted ideally during the 2019 canvass, and at the latest before the national data match test.
- 7.4. Testing local datasets before using them in a live data matching step under the reformed canvass will ensure that EROs are using local data only if it is beneficial. Local data should provide supplementary matches to the mandatory national data match, as if local data matches overlap with national data matches, the benefit of using those datasets will be limited. As such, it is strongly advised that EROs test any local datasets they wish to use under the reformed canvass before including the data in a live data matching step.
- 7.5. It is important to note that even if an ERO was unable to test local data in the Canvass Reform Data Test, they can still test local data within any canvass from 2020 onwards, relying only on national data for the first reformed canvass. As such, there is no need to go live with untested local data.
- 7.6. Parts I and II of the Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance were issued alongside the Interim Statement of Policy in March 2019. The Canvass Reform Data Test Guidance set out the preparatory action that EROs must complete before the test (Part I) as well as action required to collect and utilise local data should they choose to do so (Part II).

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**Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee
Wednesday, 20 November 2019**

REPORT TITLE:	CONCLUSION OF STATUTORY REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES 2019
REPORT OF:	Director: Governance and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider the outcome of the consultation pursuant to the statutory review of polling districts and polling places 2019.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee considers for approval the proposed changes and recommendations contained in this report and agrees the Council's Polling Districts and Polling Places with effect from 1 January 2020.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to undertake a full review of their Parliamentary polling districts and polling places within the Borough and make such changes as are considered necessary to ensure they remain accessible to all electors.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options were considered. It is a statutory requirement to undertake the review.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council has a duty under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to divide Wirral Borough into Polling Districts and to designate Polling Places for each Polling District.

- 3.2 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 placed a duty on all local authorities to undertake a full review of their Parliamentary polling districts and polling places every four years.

- 3.3 This was amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, which provides that there must be a review of all "polling districts" and "polling places" within each "compulsory period". "Compulsory period" is defined as:-

- a) the period of 16 months beginning with the 1st October 2013; and
- b) the period of 16 months beginning with the 1st October of every fifth year after that.

- 3.4 The "compulsory period" determines that the next full review must be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).

- 3.5 Local government election arrangements are not automatically part of this review, however, as they are the same for both Parliamentary and local government elections within the Wirral area, it is considered sensible to conduct both reviews together.

- 3.6 The specific areas of focus for the review are polling districts and the location of polling places and polling stations within the Borough.

- 3.7 The term 'Polling District' refers to the area created by the division of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors.

- 3.8 The term 'Polling Place' refers to the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer.

- 3.9 The term 'Polling Station' refers to the room or building where the poll takes place for each election.

3.10 Whilst there is no statutory requirement to review polling districts and polling places in the years between such full reviews, the Council's Electoral Services evaluates the effectiveness and suitability of polling places and stations following each election and reports any issues/changes required to the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee as necessary, thereby ensuring that the Borough's electors continue to have the best facilities for voting which are practicable in the circumstances.

3.11 The purpose of the review is to principally ensure that:

- a. all electors in the Borough have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- b. so far as reasonable and practicable, the polling districts, places and stations are accessible to all electors including those who are disabled and when considering the designation of a polling place to have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons; and
- c. where there is no fully accessible building conveniently located for the electors in an area, where it is necessary to use a place where the access is not ideal then every reasonable adjustment must be undertaken to provide access for all Electors.

3.12 Notification of the Review

3.13 The review formally commenced on 19 August 2019 with the publication of a formal notice on the Council's website, and notices circulated to all Council One-Stop Shops.

3.14 Notification of the review and how to participate was sent to elected representatives, local political party offices and local disability and community groups, and a press release was issued to provide general notification of the review.

3.15 Consultation

3.16 The consultation period began on 19 August 2019 and ended on 18 October 2019.

3.17 Representations and comments were sought from electors, Councillors, MPs, the (Acting) Returning Officer and those with expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for disabled people with regards to existing Polling Districts and Places.

3.18 Outcome of Consultation

3.19 During the consultation, Electoral Services received representations from electors and Ward Councillors. The representations were received in the form of eleven emails and one letter from the public, and six emails from Ward Councillors.

3.20 Five emails commented they were satisfied with the current arrangements; seven email and one letter related to requests for changes to polling places; two emails related to requests for changes in polling district boundaries; and three emails commented on the general dissatisfaction with using schools as polling places.

- 3.21** Three emails were received that related to areas not considered to be part of the review. One email was a general offer to use their Church hall and two emails commented on Ward boundaries.
- 3.22** The Council's (Acting) Returning Officer submitted comments on 2 September 2019, as required by legislation, on both existing and proposed polling stations and with the exception of five polling districts, the comments stated that the current arrangements offer the most reasonable facilities for voting. Five polling districts were commented on in respect of proposed changes to polling district boundaries and polling places.
- 3.23 Conclusion and recommendations**
- 3.24** The review has been useful in that, due to the small amount of representations received requesting changes, the public and elected representatives are largely satisfied with the current arrangements and so it is recommended that the majority of polling districts and polling places remain unchanged.
- 3.25** In respect of the representations received requesting changes to some polling district boundaries and polling places along with two polling places being unavailable, it was necessary to look at and consider alternative options.
- 3.26** In relation to using schools as polling places, the rules that govern the conduct of elections give the (Acting) Returning Officer a statutory right to use, free of charge, schools maintained or assisted by a local authority as well as those schools that receive grants made out of moneys provided by Parliament. This includes academies and free schools. Currently, forty five of the one hundred and three designated polling places are schools. This equates to less than half.
- 3.27** The decision to close the school falls on the headteacher and will usually depend upon whether arrangements can be made for voting to take place separately from the rest of the school premises. Where possible, the (Acting) Returning Officer and the school will make such arrangements for the school to remain open, however, pupil safety must always be considered as paramount and if the school decides to close on the day of the poll and it is not reasonably practicable to arrange an alternative day to try and make up the lost education, the school will be treated as if it had met the requisite 190 days for the purposes of the school year regulations.
- 3.28** Clear guidance is provided to schools on this matter so there should be no misunderstanding about the legal position and the need for schools to co-operate in making rooms available for polling station use. Any reluctance to use schools as polling places despite the statutory position would lead to an increase in the use of private buildings or mobile units even where the most reasonable facilities could be provided within a school which would then incur additional costs.
- 3.29** Ideally, there would be the choice of a range of fully accessible buildings, conveniently located for electors in the area. In practice, however, the choice of polling place will often be very limited and a school deemed the only suitable venue that complies with the Council's obligations.

- 3.30** An email was received from an elector who commented to stop using the current polling place for polling district GC (Bebington Ward) which is St Andrews C of E Primary School [Townfield Lane] and suggested using Mayer Hall or Civic Centre in Bebington instead. The suggestions were investigated by Electoral Services but were discounted on the basis that the Civic Centre is located in a different polling district and Mayer Hall is located at the opposite end of the polling district (as shown on the map in Appendix 1) and would result in some electors having to travel further to vote. The headteacher was contacted to discuss possible arrangements to allow the school to remain open during elections, however, the headteacher confirmed that they did not have any concerns about the school being used and that arrangements were in place in the event of any unscheduled elections. The (Acting) Returning Officer commented that the school offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. It is recommended that the status quo remains.
- 3.31** An email was received from a Councillor for Clatterbridge Ward who requested that the current polling place for polling district JA (Eastham Ward) which is Mendell Primary School [Allport Lane] be moved to Bromborough Methodist Church Hall [Allport Lane]. Concern was raised about the days children lose in school every time there is an election and they never get it back. Electoral Services has investigated the possible use of Bromborough Methodist Church Hall as a polling place. The Church was visited and has good facilities. It is located 100yds from the school (as shown on the map in Appendix 2) so there would be minimal impact on voters possibly having to travel further to vote. There would be additional costs for use of the Church who have yet to provide the exact amount and consideration should be given on the statutory guidance on the use of schools. Previous investigations into the possibility of the school remaining open during elections has proven unsuccessful. The (Acting) Returning Officer commented that Mendell Primary School offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. It is recommended that the status quo remains.
- 3.32** An email was received from an elector who commented that a review of the use of schools as polling places be carried out because of the interruption of a child's education just so people can vote. The elector gave the current polling place for polling district MD (Upton Ward) which is Fender Primary School [New Hey Road] as an example stating the school is closed each time there is voting taking place and that the school takes a lot of special needs children. The elector suggested using Woodchurch Community Centre as an alternative polling place and this was investigated by Electoral Services. However, it was discounted on the basis that the location of the building is at the far end of the polling district and sits on the boundary which runs alongside the M53 motorway (as shown on the map in Appendix 3) whilst the school is located in a central position within the polling district and is as close to electors as possible. The (Acting) Returning Officer commented that Fender Primary School offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. It is recommended that the status quo remains.
- 3.33** An email was received from an elector in respect of the current polling place for polling district UA (New Brighton Ward) which is SS Peter & Paul Primary School [Atherton Street/Sandringham Drive] encouraging the Council to seek an alternative polling place because the school is closed at least once a year and more when unexpected elections take place, with the effect that pupils receive less teaching than they should do. The elector went further to say it also causes additional problems for parents to make child care arrangements. The elector did not provide an alternative building.

- 3.34** In respect of the same polling place in paragraph 3.33, an email was also received from the Clerk to Governors with a letter attached from the Chair of Governors of SS Peter & Paul Primary School. The letter requests that, again, an alternative building be identified for use as a polling place rather than the school. The reasons for this request generally relate to concerns about the disruption to the school attendance and the challenges faced by families working full time balancing work and school closures. However, the concerns are not only directed at the school being used as a polling place. The Chair of Governors also mentions school closures due to other cultural events taking place in Wirral.
- 3.35** Electoral Services has attempted to identify alternative buildings, however, other than the Church that the school is next to, there are no other buildings that could be used as a polling place. Unfortunately, the Church declined being used as a polling place. The (Acting) Returning Officer commented that SS Peter & Paul Primary School offers the most reasonable facilities for voting. It is recommended that the status quo remains.
- 3.36** Proposals for changes to polling places and polling district boundaries are as follows with the comments of the (Acting) Returning Officer:
- 3.37 Polling Districts in Eastham Ward**
- 3.38** An email was received from a Councillor for Eastham Ward who commented on the loss of Eastham Youth Centre (Youth Hub) in Lyndale Road which is the current polling place for polling district JD and a suggestion for an alternative venue. The Councillor also commented on a possible review of polling district boundary anomalies where residents in the same road have to vote in different polling places, specifically the boundary between polling district JA and JC around the Bettisfield Avenue area and also the boundary between polling district JC and JD along Heygarth Road.
- 3.39** When reviewing the boundary around the Bettisfield Avenue area, part of the boundary between polling districts JA and JC runs down the middle of Bettisfield Avenue and so residents living in the even numbered properties vote at the polling place for polling district JA [Mendell Primary School] and residents living in the odd numbered properties vote at the polling place for polling district JC [Heygarth Primary School]. However, to resolve the anomaly, it was not a simple case of just moving the boundary that runs down the middle of Bettisfield Avenue and so the surrounding roads were looked at as well.
- 3.40** When reviewing the boundary along Heygarth Road, most of the boundary between polling districts JC and JD runs down the middle of Heygarth Road and so residents living in the even numbered properties vote at the polling place for polling district JC [Heygarth Primary School] and residents living in the odd numbered properties vote at the polling place for polling district JD [Eastham Youth Centre]. Again, to resolve the anomaly, it was not a simple case of just moving the boundary that runs down the middle of Heygarth Road and so the whole boundary was looked at.
- 3.41** The current polling place for polling district JD is Eastham Youth Centre (or Youth Hub) [Lyndale Avenue]. After the UK European Parliamentary election on 23 May 2019 it was confirmed by Steve Chan, Service Manager for Youth Support Service, Childrens Services, that the existing Youth Hub is due for demolition within the next 12 months

and would no longer be available for use as a polling place. The Councillor for Eastham Ward suggested the changing room at the Plymyard Sports Pavilion as a possible alternative polling place, however, the Sports Pavilion is located well within a different polling district and so this suggestion has been discounted.

3.42 An email was received by another Councillor from Eastham Ward who suggested using Carlett Evangelical Church on Carlett Boulevard as an alternative building to replace the Youth Hub, however, when contacted by Electoral Services, the Church declined to be used as a polling place.

3.43 As no other alternative building has been identified within polling district JD, I propose to move part of the boundary between polling districts JD and JE to encompass the Chapel of the Holy Spirit which would become the new polling place. This building has been inspected by Electoral Services (see Appendix 6) and is considered suitable for the purposes of being used as a polling place, therefore, it is recommended that the Chapel of the Holy Spirit [Eastham Rake] be designated as the polling place for polling district JD (Eastham Ward).

3.44 Details of the proposals in respect of paragraphs 3.38 to 3.43 above are:

- 1) to resolve the polling district boundary anomaly around the Bettisfield Avenue area move part of the boundary between polling districts **JA** and **JC** north (as shown on the map in Appendix 7). Polling district JC would encompass 342 residential properties that include 721 electors of which 134 are postal voters. See table below.

Move from Polling District JA to Polling District JC

Road/Street	House No.'s	No. of properties	No. of electors	No. of Postal Voters
Bettisfield Avenue	1 – 49	25	63	12
Bronington Avenue	1 – 23 20 – 2	22	43	10
Crossdale Road	named houses	17	38	7
Dale Road	1 – 15	8	12	8
Dearnford Avenue	1 – 157 104 – 2	128	256	42
Dearnford Close	1 – 17 18 – 2	17	38	6
Plymyard Avenue (part)	45 – 61 64 – 48	18	41	16
Raeburn Avenue	91 – 127 102 – 196	67	150	19
Redbrook Close	1 – 7 8 – 2	8	19	1
Springhill Avenue	1 – 15 24 – 2	20	44	10
Wingate Road	1 – 23	12	17	3

Total	342	721	134
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After consulting with Eastham Ward Councillors, consideration was given to amending this proposal slightly by leaving Raeburn Avenue within polling district JA but after revising the proposed boundary this would not be the best solution.

- 2) to resolve the polling district boundary anomaly along Heygarth Road, move the whole boundary between polling districts **JC** and **JD** south (as shown on the map in Appendix 8). Polling district JC would encompass 141 residential properties that include 274 electors of which 43 are postal voters. See table below.

Move from Polling District JD to Polling District JC

Road/Street	House No.'s	No. of properties	No. of electors	No. of Postal Voters
Chesterfield Road	1 – 85	43	83	11
Heygarth Road	1 – 199	96	188	32
Plymyard Avenue (part)	113 – 115	2	3	0
Total		141	274	43

- 3) to resolve the issue of no alternative buildings available for use as a polling place in polling district JD, move part of the boundary between polling districts **JD** and **JE** south (as shown on the map in Appendix 9). Polling district JD would encompass the Chapel of the Holy Spirit and 43 residential properties on Eastham Rake that include 65 electors of which 8 are postal voters. See table below.

Move from Polling District JE to Polling District JD

Road/Street	House No.'s	No. of properties	No. of electors	No. of Postal Voters
Eastham Rake (part)	29 – 107	43	65	8

3.45 These proposals would result in the electorates across all of the polling districts being slightly more evenly distributed as follows:

- **JA** Polling District electorate will be reduced from 3264 to 2543. The Polling Station electorate will be reduced from 2637 to 2050. The polling place remains as Mendell Primary School [Allport Lane].
- **JC** Polling District electorate will increase from 1841 to 2836. The Polling Station electorate will increase from 1537 to 2355. The polling place remains as Heygarth Primary School [Heygarth Road].

- **JD** Polling District electorate will be reduced from 2687 to 2480. The Polling Station electorate will be reduced from 2263 to 2091. The proposed alternative polling place is the Chapel of the Holy Spirit [Eastham Rake].
- **JE** Polling District electorate will be reduced from 2081 to 2016. The Polling Station electorate will be reduced from 1813 to 1754. The polling place remains as Delamere Community Centre [Delamere Avenue].
- **JB** Polling District is not affected by these proposals.

Please refer to the table below:

Polling District	2 Sept 2019 electorate	2 Sept 2019 postal voters	No. of electors moved + / -	No of postal voters moved + / -	Revised electorate	Revised postal voters
JA	3264	627	- 721	- 134	2543	493
JB	1158	149	0	0	1158	149
JC	1841	304	+ 995	+ 177	2836	481
JD	2687	424	- 207	- 35	2480	389
JE	2108	295	- 67	- 8	2041	287

3.46 The (Acting) Returning Officer considers these proposals to offer the most reasonable facilities for voting.

3.47 Polling District VC and VF (Wallasey Ward)

3.48 Electoral Services has identified that an anomaly exists with the boundary between polling districts VC and VF. Some properties in Wallasey Village are currently situated in polling district VC and electors in these properties vote at Wallasey United Reformed Church [Wallasey Village]. There does not appear to be a practical explanation as to why these properties are situated in polling district VC and so I propose that a small adjustment be made to move these properties into polling district VF to allow electors to vote at Wallasey Village Library [St Georges Road] which is closer. Details of the proposal are:

- 1) Move part of the boundary between polling districts **VC** and **VF** north (as shown on the map in Appendix 10) to encompass 15 residential properties on Wallasey Village. There are 20 electors of which 2 are postal voters. See table below.

Move from Polling District VC to Polling District VF

Road/Street	House No.'s	No. of properties	No. of electors	No. of Postal Voters
Wallasey Village (part)	30 – 48	15	20	2

3.49 The proposal is a modest adjustment, which aims to assist Electors. It does not have any significant impact on the number of Electors in each polling district. The electorates will be as follows.

VC Polling District electorate will be reduced from 2783 to 2763. The Polling Station electorate will be reduced from 2135 to 2117.

VF Polling District electorate will increase from 1823 to 1843. The Polling Station electorate will increase from 1521 to 1539.

Please refer to the table below:

Polling District	2 Sept 2019 electorate	2 Sept 2019 postal voters	No. of electors moved + / -	No of postal voters moved + / -	Revised electorate	Revised postal voters
VC	2783	648	- 20	- 2	2763	646
VF	1823	302	+ 20	+ 2	1843	304

3.50 The (Acting) Returning Officer considers this proposal to offer the most reasonable facilities for voting.

3.51 Subject to Members approval of these proposals and recommendations, any changes will come into effect from the 1st January 2020 due to preparations for the UK Parliamentary General Election taking place on 12 December 2019 and the printing of poll cards before this meeting.

3.52 A Notice of Conclusion of the Review will be published on the Council's website and displayed in One Stop Shops.

3.53 Following the conclusion of the review, individuals will have a right to make representations to the Electoral Commission, although the Commission will only consider representations in respect of the review process not being conducted correctly.

3.54 The Borough's polling districts and places will continue to be monitored each year and a full review carried out every five years as required.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Chapel of the Holy Spirit (polling district JD) has not stated an exact cost but other similar venues charge around £350.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to complete a Polling Districts and Polling Places Review by 31 January 2020 as set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 Undertaking this review impacted on resources in respect of officer time, particularly as the period of this review traversed the annual canvass of the Electoral Register. However, requirements were met from within existing resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Review provides an opportunity for the Council to ensure accessibility to all Electors, mitigate any potential hazards and health and safety risks; and ensure that the Council addresses any identified risks affecting any potential Electors, particularly if they suffer from a disability.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Details of the consultations are set out within this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Review has used the Electoral Commissions Evaluation Checklist which addresses equality and diversity issues relevant to Polling Districts, Places and Stations.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 No such implications arise from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Polling District GC

Appendix 2 – Polling District JA

Appendix 3 – Polling District MD

Appendix 4 – None

Appendix 5 – None

Appendix 6 – Polling District JD Proposed Polling Place – Evaluation Checklist

Appendix 7 – JA & JC Proposed Boundary change

Appendix 8 – JC & JD Proposed Boundary change

Appendix 9 – JD & JE Proposed Boundary change and JD Polling Place

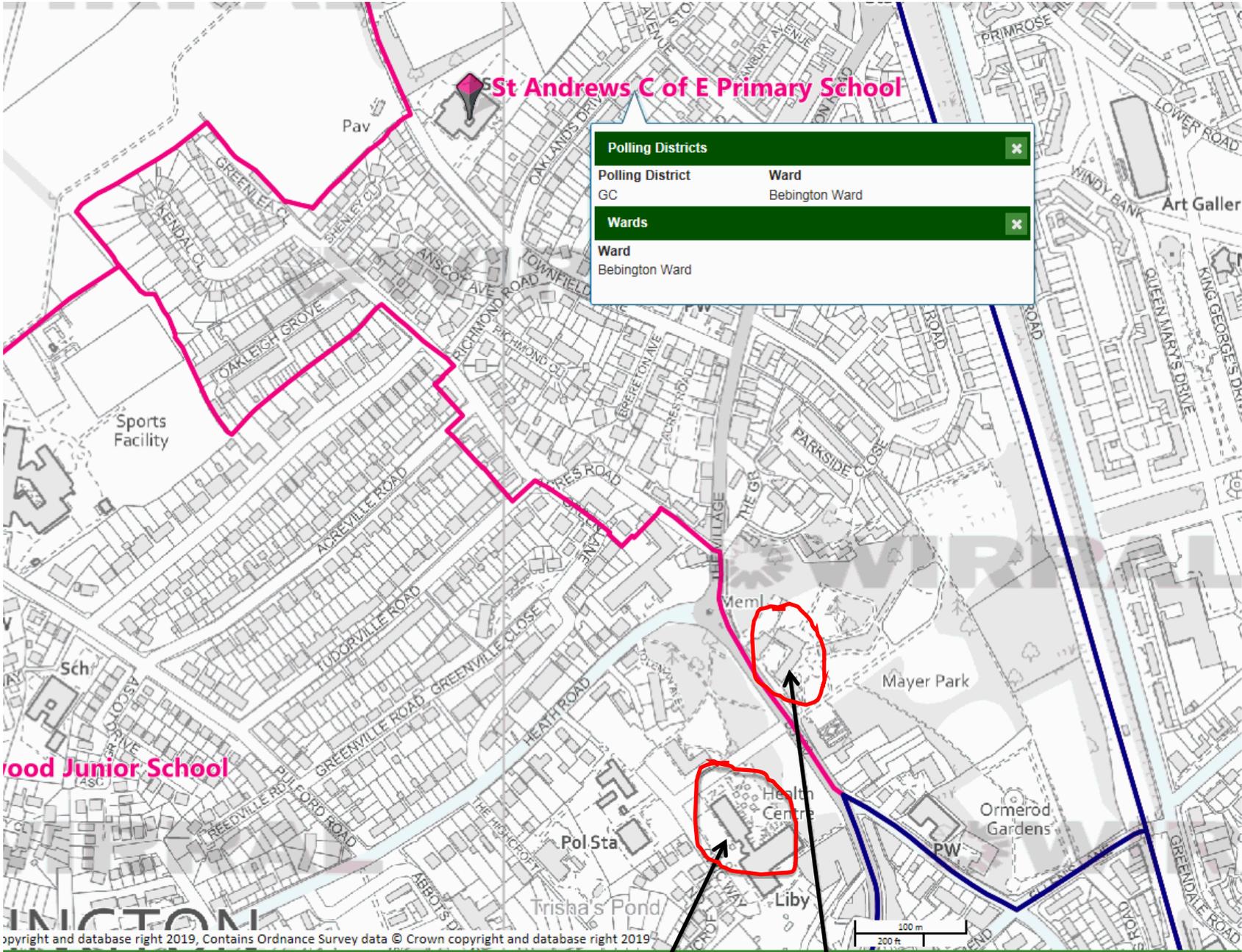
Appendix 10 – VC & VF Proposed Boundary change

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

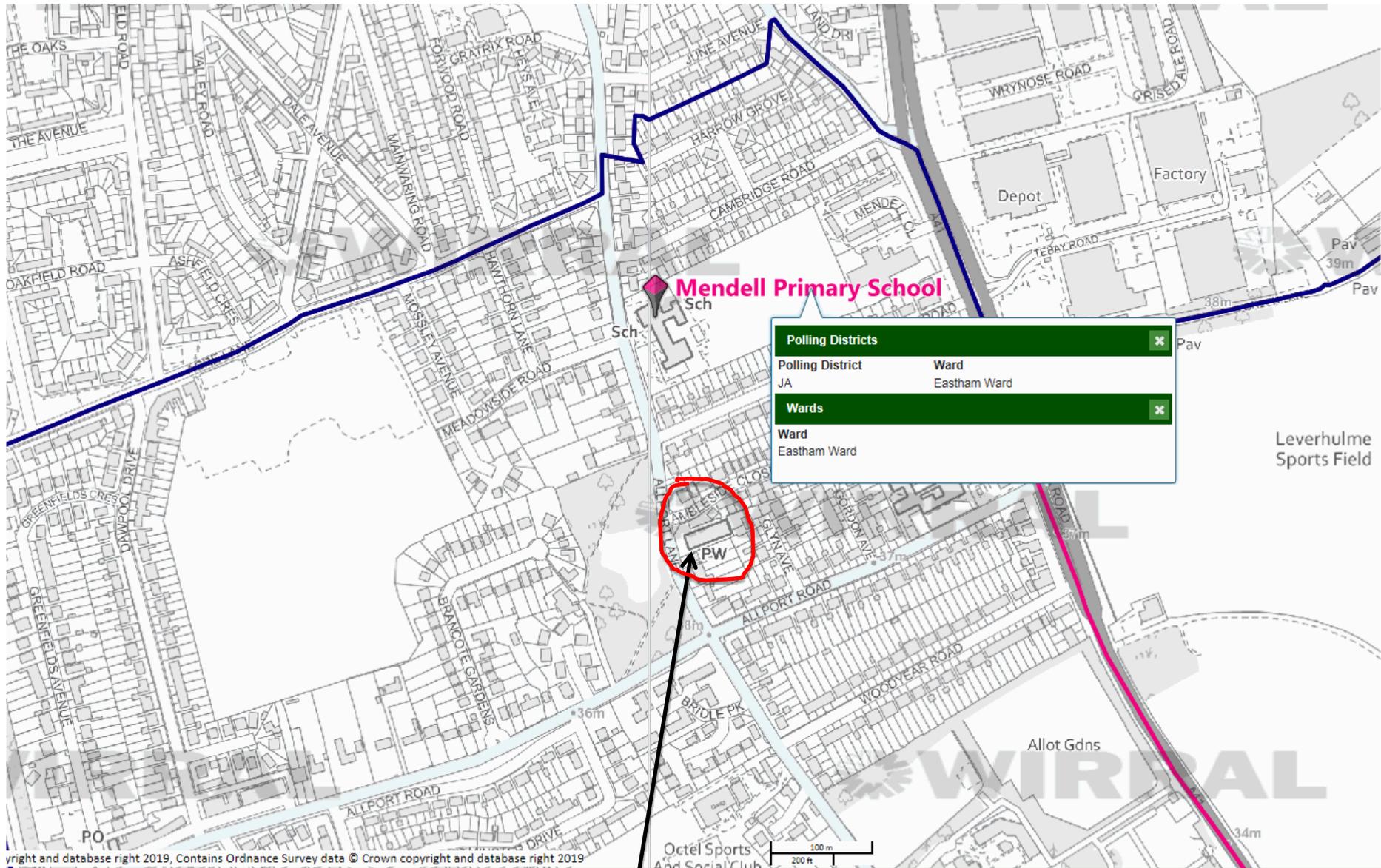
SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Review of Polling Districts and Places 2019	18 September 2019



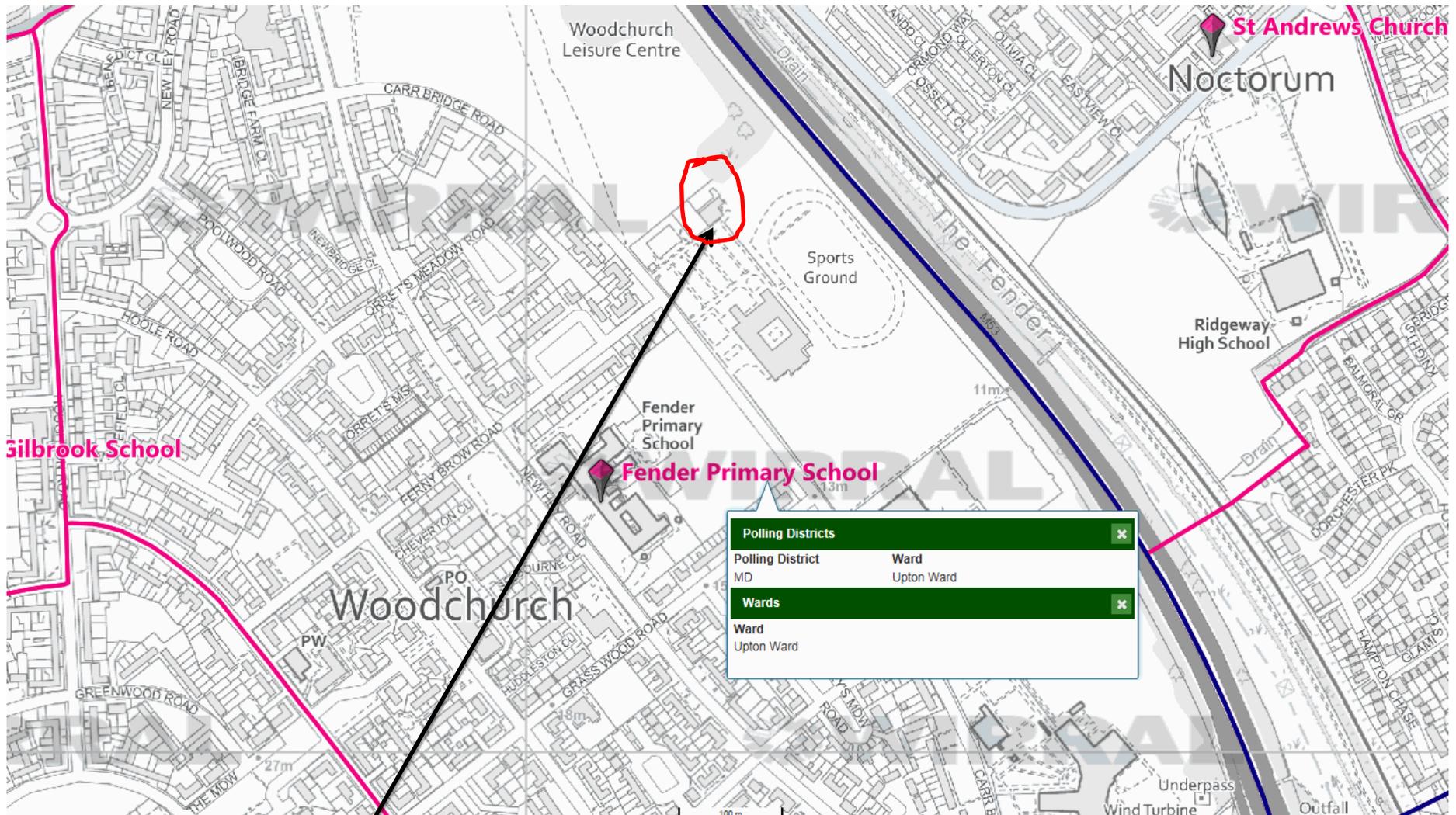
Suggested alternative polling places Civic Centre and Mayer Hall

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Suggested alternative polling place is Bromborough Methodist Church, Allport Lane

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Suggested alternative polling place Woodchurch Community Centre

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Part B

External areas access and facilities – Evaluate external access and facilities both outside the perimeter of the building and within the boundary of the building itself.

Check	(√)	Comments
• Are there good public transport links to the polling place?	✓	YES.
• Is the approach to the building safe and free from obstructions and does it have a dropped kerb?	✓	DROPPED KERB. PRIVATE OFF ROAD PARKING
• Is the building clearly identifiable?	✓	YES.
• Is additional signage required between street and entrance?	✓	YES - NEW POLLING STATION
• Is there the facility to put up the required signage for polling day?	✓	YES - RAILINGS.
• Are there parking facilities for disabled people?	✓	2 DESIGNATED YES DISABLED BAYS.
• Are there parking facilities for polling staff?	✓	YES PARKING FOR APPROX 20 CARS
• Does the approach to the building have external lighting?	✓	YES - LIGHTS O/S.
• Does the building have level access? Yes/No. If no -	✓	
• Has a purpose built ramp been installed?	✓	
• If so, does it have a handrail?	✓	
• Does the ramp have a gentle slope?	✓	
• Does the building require a temporary ramp or is there an alternative disabled route?	NO.	
• Is the entrance door wide enough for a disabled person using a motorised wheelchair?	✓	YES DOUBLE DOORS.
• Are the doors light enough for frail/elderly voters to open?	✓	YES.
• Can the 'Guidance for voters' notice be clearly displayed outside the premises, as required by the election rules?	✓	YES.
• Are there any external security concerns?	X	NO.
• Can tellers be accommodated outside the building?	✓	VESTIBULE

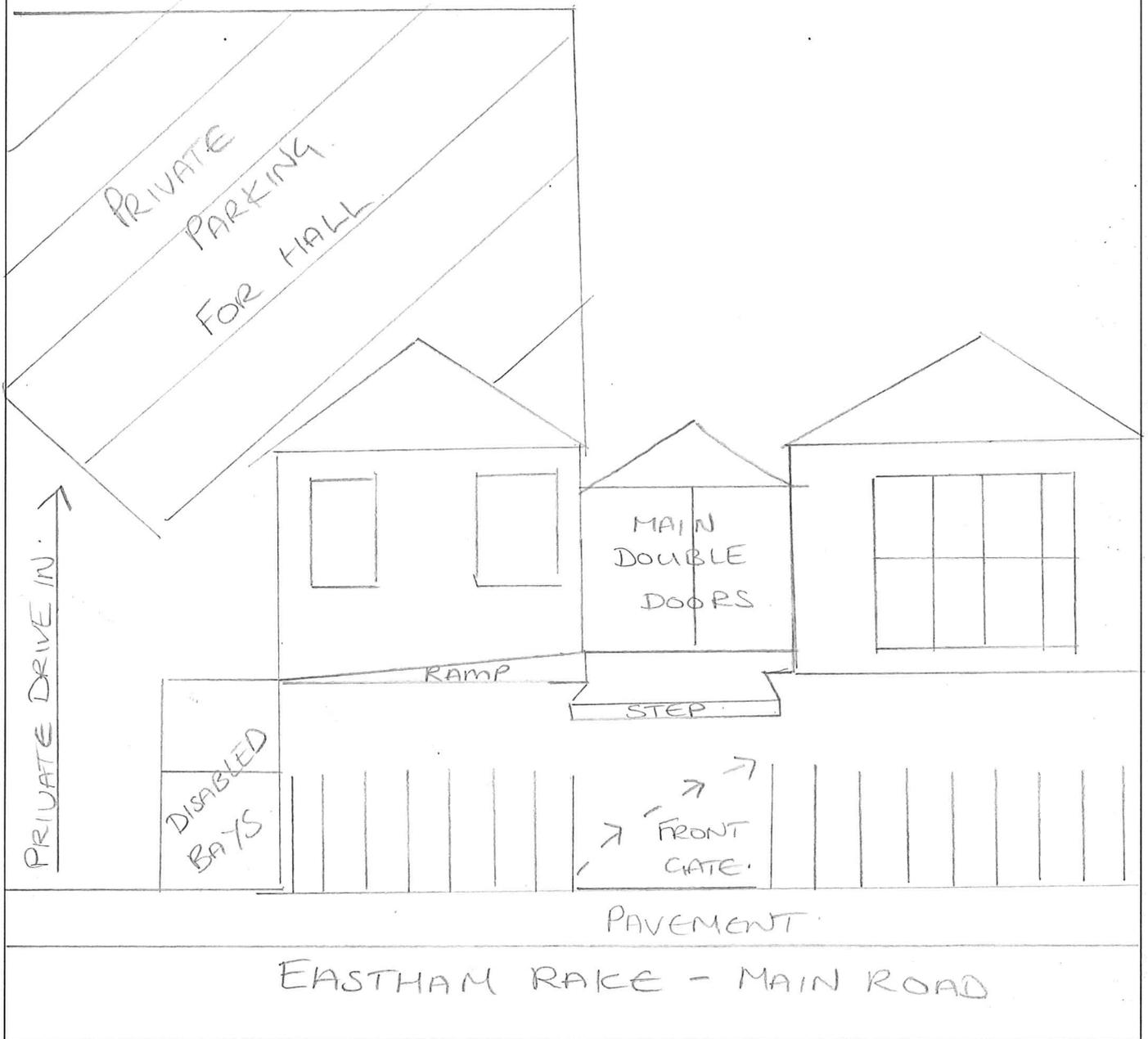
Please complete template B1 on next page showing external layout, street names, car parking, ramps, steps, lighting and appropriate places for signage.

B1 – External plan

Show external layout, street name(s), car parking (including disabled car parking), ramps, steps, lighting, appropriate places for signage, etc.

Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.

SEE PICTURES



Part C

Internal areas access and facilities – Assess the internal access to the polling station, but exclude the polling station itself (ie. covering the corridors leading to the polling station accommodation and facilities available, but not the area in which polling will be carried out). Should the proposed building, room or area to be used as the polling station have direct access to the road/pavement or external parts, Part C can be excluded from this assessment.

Check	Page ^(v) 49	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all doors easy to open (including by 	<p>✓</p>	<p>YES</p>

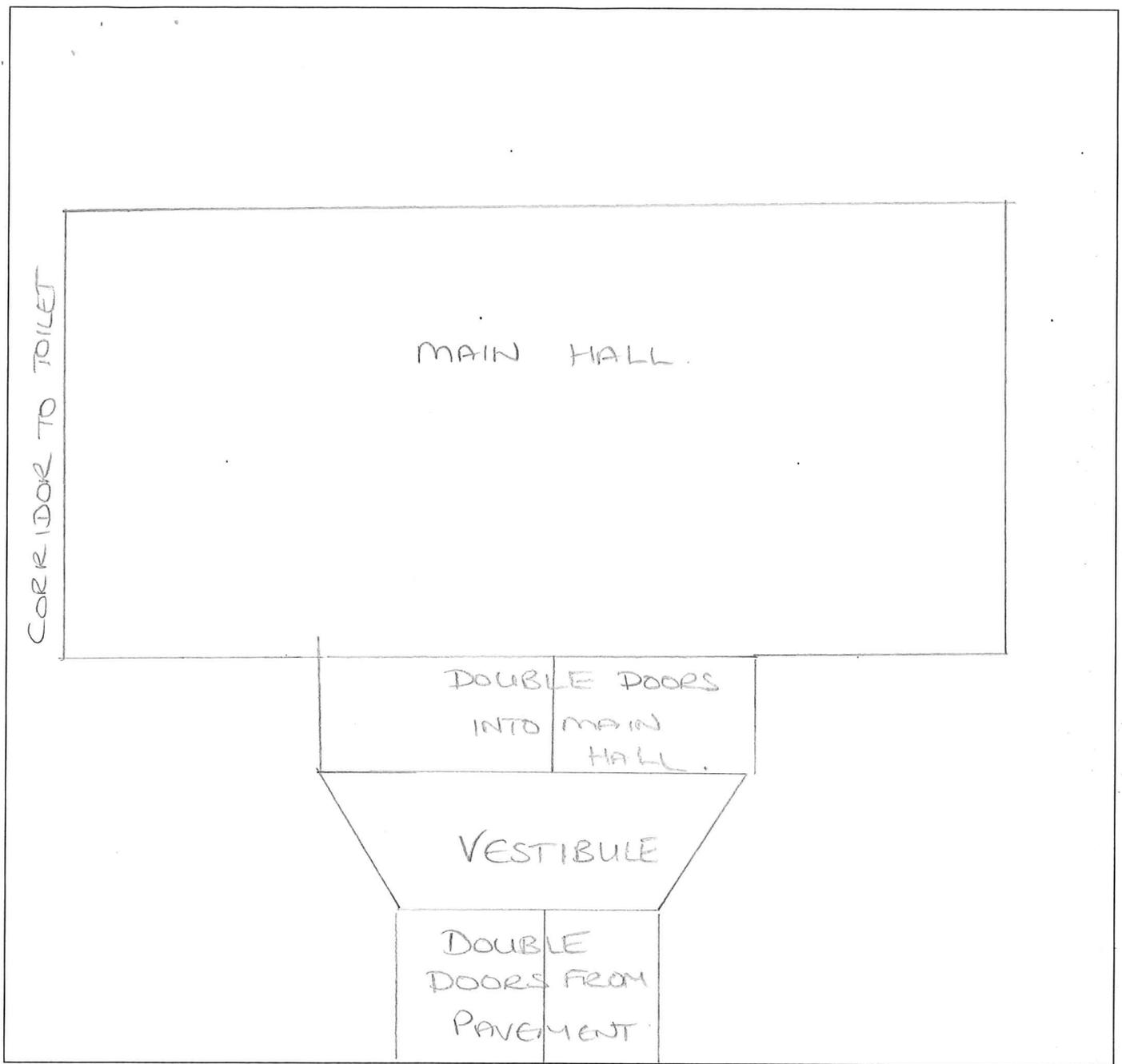
wheelchair users) or do they need to be permanently locked back?	✓	
• Are there any internal steps or obstructions/hazards?		N/A COMPLETELY LEVEL.
• Are any doormats level with the floor?	N	NO DOORMATS.
• Is the floor covering non-slip (especially in wet weather)?	Y	
• Are there any corridors that may cause access problems?	N	
• Is there adequate lighting in the corridors?	Y	
• Are there toilet facilities?	Y	DISABLED TOILETS AND GENERAL USE TOILETS.
• Is there a kitchen that staff can use?	Y	
• Is the area adequately lit for day and night time?	Y	
• Is there adequate space for signage?	Y	
• How many polling stations can the building accommodate?	2	
• Does the building have a telephone available (land line) in the event of mobile network problems?	Y	

Please complete template C1 below showing internal areas including corridors, internal doors, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards in relation to access to the polling station itself.

C1 – Internal access leading to polling station(s)

Show internal areas of the building, excluding the actual polling station where voting will take place, including corridors that link to the polling station, kitchen, toilets and highlighting any possible signage requirements and potential hazards. Also indicate any areas of poor lighting, door swing direction and ease of opening, and areas of uneven floor, etc.

Sketch layout; provide photographs as appropriate.



Part D

The polling station(s)

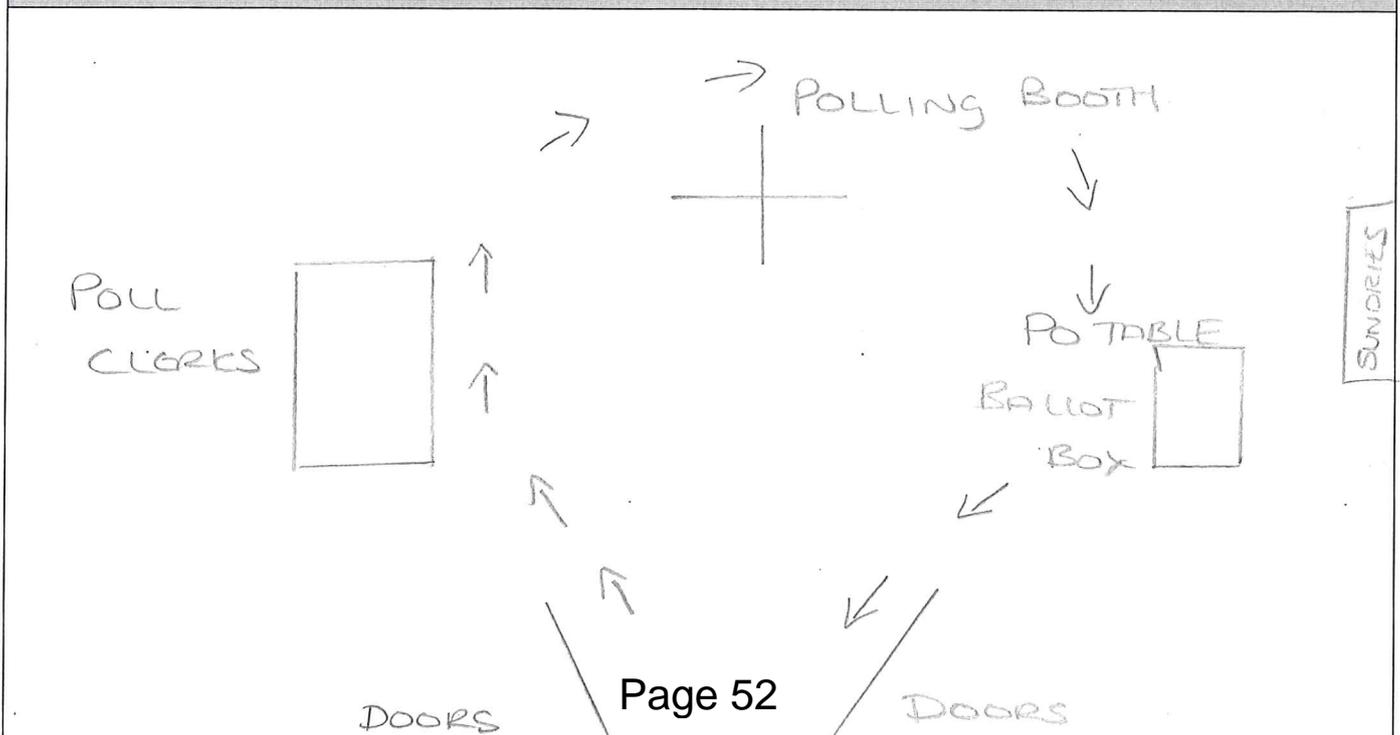
Check	(v)	Comments
• Is there sufficient space inside the polling station to comfortably accommodate staff, voters, polling agents and observers?	✓	YES.
• Is there sufficient space for administering all types of elections, including combined elections?	✓	YES.
• If multiple polling stations need to be provided, are there other rooms available, or can the space be divided to provide adequate room for	Page 51 ✓	SPACE COULD BE SPLIT INTO TWO AREAS IF REQUIRED.

more than one polling station?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of high turnout, is there sufficient space for managing the flow and accommodating a high volume of electors? If yes, could ballot booths be positioned in a way that would preserve the secrecy of the ballot? 	✓	YES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there adequate lighting for day and night time? 	Y	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there suitable furniture (tables and chairs) available for all types of election for polling staff and those voters who may need to rest? 	Y	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the official notices be clearly displayed, including the large-print version of the ballot paper(s)? 	Y	

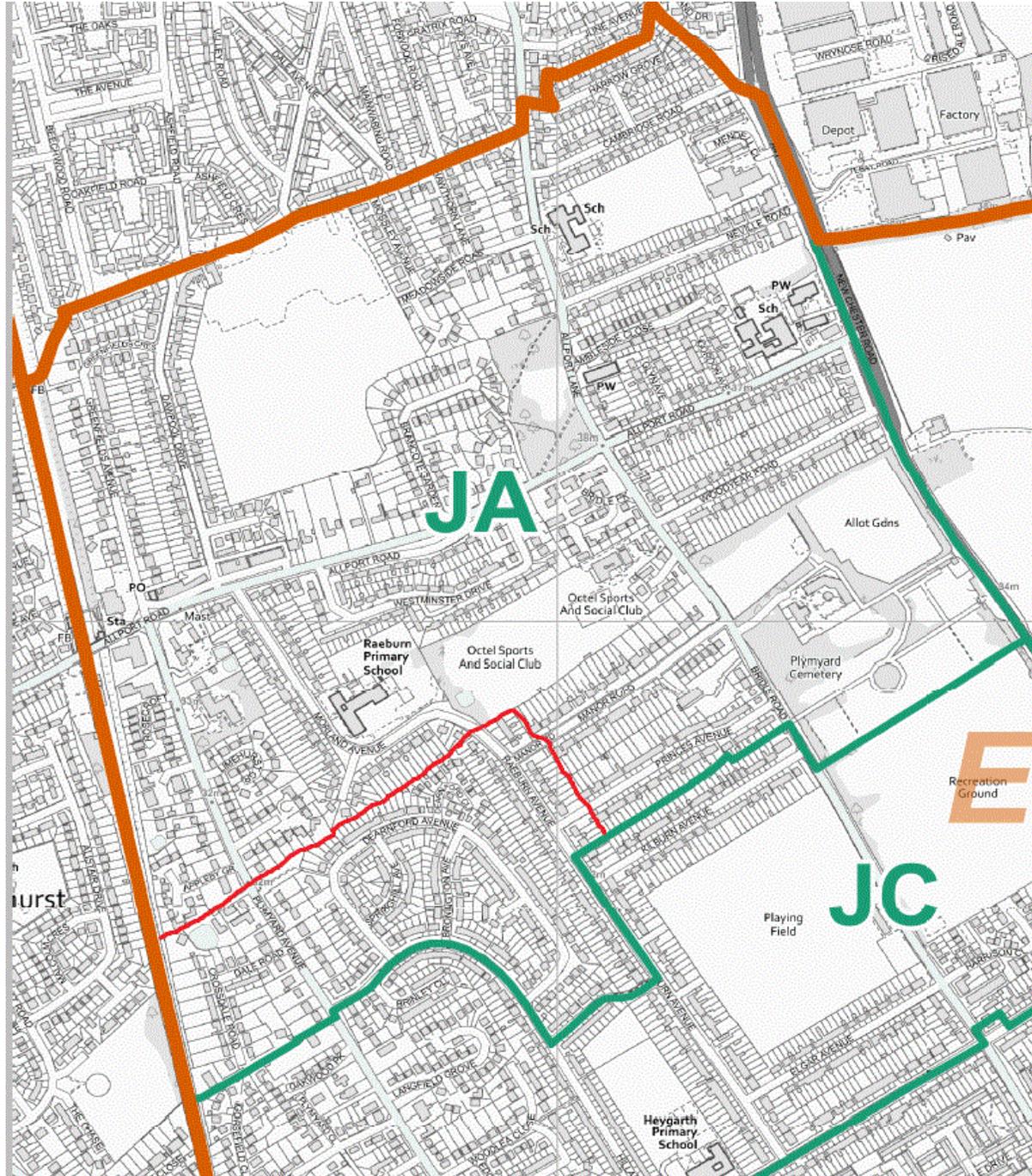
Please complete template D1 indicating how the polling station should be laid out to accommodate all those entitled to be inside the polling station, taking into account access requirements for all voters, including those in wheelchairs, and demonstrating how the space should be used to ensure the most efficient flow of voters and the effective administration of the voting process.

D1 – Internal – The polling station(s)

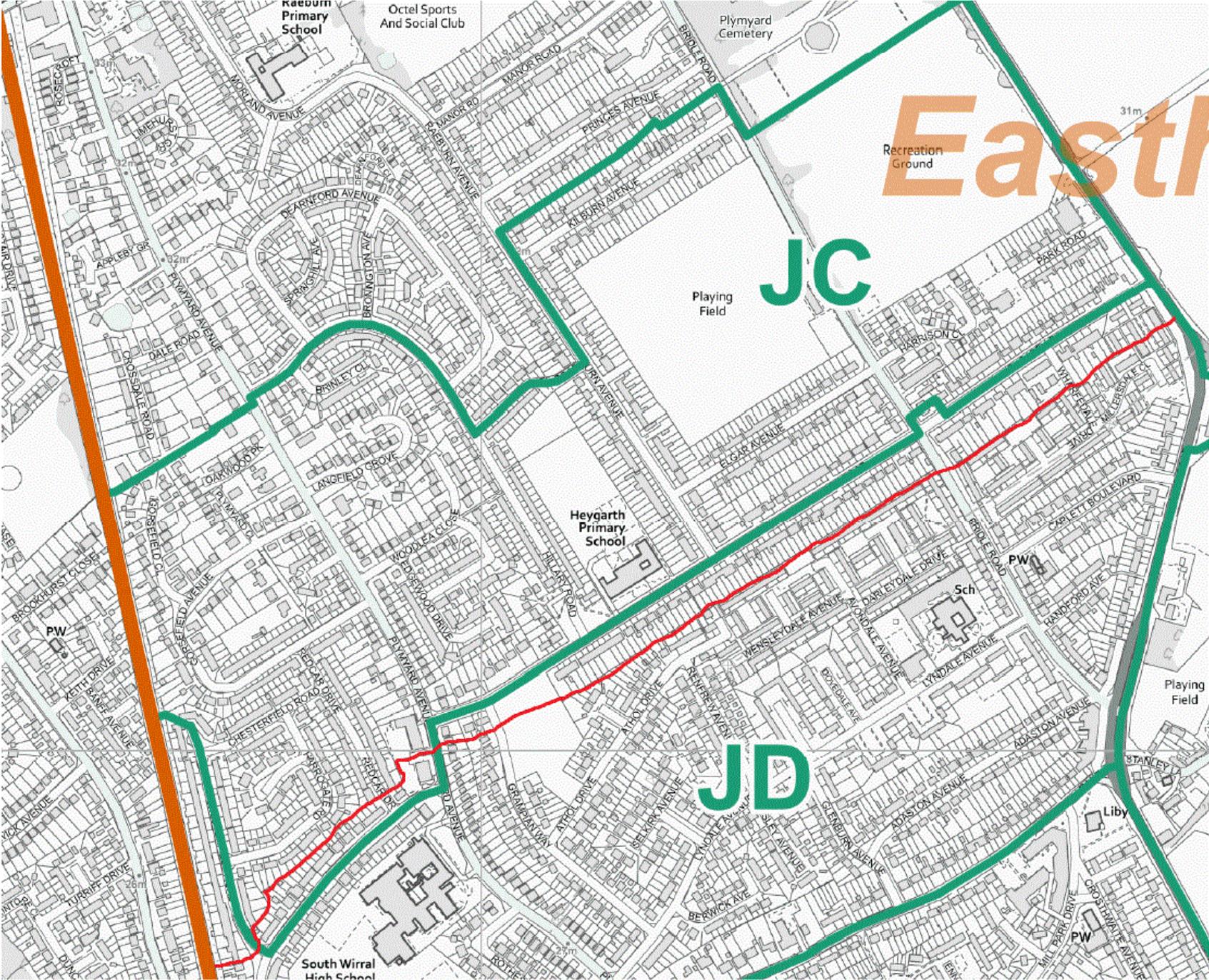
Identify the space and shape of the area available for polling. Include the position of the door(s), any windows and how the furniture and equipment should be laid out to ensure the effective administration of and best possible access to the voting process.



APPENDIX 7 – JA & JC Proposed Boundary change shown in red

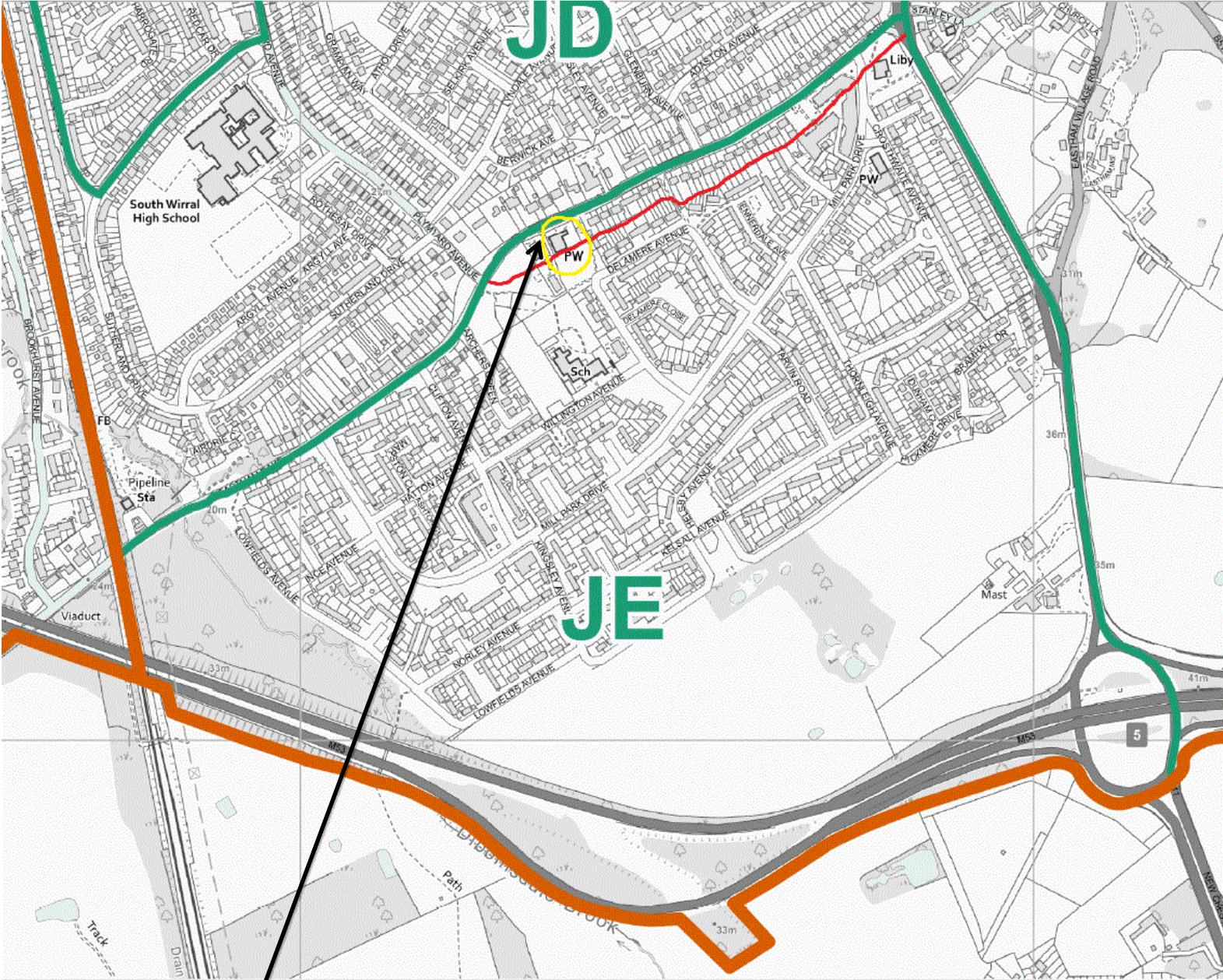


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APPENDIX 9 – JD & JE Proposed Boundary change shown in red and JD Polling Place



Proposed polling place for polling district JD is Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Eastham Rake

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